



Vinterra  
Life

## AYURVEDA HEALTH CARE CENTER

# PITTA/ KAPHA FOOD PROGRAM

HEALING THROUGH HARMONY

44 Pent Road, Madison CT 06443  
(203) 640-2614  
www.vinterra.life

## Basic Principles

**Qualities to reduce:** Hot, heavy, moist

**Best:** Bitter, astringent

**Small Amounts:** Astringent, sour

**Worst tastes:** Sour, salty

## GRAINS

These may be eaten as a cooked grain or as yeasted bread.

**Best:** Barley, basmati rice, corn flour products (except corn chips), rye

**Small Amounts:** Amaranth, millet, quinoa, rice (brown)

**Avoid:** Buckwheat, oats, wheat, white sticky rice

## DAIRY

It is best to use raw or organic milk products. Milk should be taken warm with a small amount of spices such as ginger and cardamom.

**Best:** Skim milk

**Small Amounts:** Ghee, goat milk, low-fat yogurt

**Avoid:** Butter, buttermilk, cheeses (hard and soft), cottage cheese, cream, kefir, ice cream, milk (whole), sour cream, yogurt (frozen), yogurt (whole milk)

## SWEETENERS

Overuse of any sweetener will eventually cause an imbalance.

**Best:** Stevia

**Small Amounts:** Fresh honey

**Avoid:** Brown sugar, date sugar, dextrose, fructose, grape sugar, honey (older than 6 months), maltose, maple sugar, maple syrup, molasses, rice syrup, white table sugar

## OILS

Oils, being heavy and moist, should generally be used in small amounts in *pitta/kapha* types. The best oils are lighter, drier and cooler.

**Best:** Canola, corn, soy, sunflower

**Small Amounts:** Margarine, safflower

**Avoid:** Almond, avocado, castor, coconut, flax-

seed, lard, mustard, peanut, sesame

## FRUITS

As fruits tend to be light and cooling, they are generally good for *pitta/kapha* types. Because they contain a lot of water, overuse can aggravate *kapha*. Dried fruits are the best, though fresh fruit may be taken as well. Greater amounts may be eaten in the summer and less the rest of the year. Most sour fruits have the unique effect (*prabhav*) of being cooling, despite the presence of fire in their taste. This makes them good for *pitta*, though they may still aggravate *kapha* in excess.

**Best:** Apples, blueberries, cranberries, lemon, lime, pomegranate

**Small Amounts:** Apricots, blackberries, cantaloupe, cherries, grapefruit, jujube, nectarines, oranges, peaches, pears, persimmons, pineapple (sweet), plums, raspberries, tangerines, watermelon

**Avoid:** Dates, figs, grapes, mango, papaya, pineapple (sour), strawberries

## VEGETABLES

Raw vegetables are best in the summer. A mixture of raw and cooked may be eaten the rest of the year. Being light and cool, most vegetables reduce both *pitta* and *kapha* and thus should be eaten in great abundance.

**Best:** Alfalfa sprouts, artichokes, asparagus, bean sprouts, bell peppers, bitter melon, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cilantro, cress, green beans, green peppers, kale, leafy lettuce greens, lettuce, mushrooms, parsley, peas (green, snow), pumpkin, sunflower sprouts, sweet peas, turnips

**Small Amounts:** Beets, carrots, corn, cucumber, eggplant, garlic (cooked), leeks, mustard greens, okra, onion (fresh), parsley, potatoes, seaweed, spinach, squash (yellow), tomatoes (sweet)

**Avoid:** Avocado, chilies, Jerusalem artichoke, radish, squash (acorn, winter) tomato paste

## NUTS AND SEEDS

Heavy, oily and slightly warm, most nuts aggravate

*pitta/kapha* individuals. Seeds are best, as they are lighter and drier.

**Best:** Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds

**Small Amounts:** Filberts, piñon (pine nuts), sesame seeds

**Avoid:** Almonds, Brazil, cashews, coconut, lotus seeds, macadamia, peanuts, pecans, pistachio, walnuts

## MEATS

Repeated research shows that plant-based diets are healthier than meat-based diets and prevent many diseases. Ayurveda and Yoga emphasize a vegetarian diet primarily for spiritual reasons. Hence, omnivores should limit meat consumption if possible. Weak patients should take meat as a soup broth. White meat is more balancing than dark meat.

**Best:** None

**Small Amounts:** Chicken, egg (white), fresh water fish, turkey

**Avoid:** Beef, duck, egg (yolk), lamb, pork, seafood, venison

## LEGUMES

Beans tend to be dry, cool and somewhat heavy. Moderate use is generally all right for *pitta/kapha* types. They should be taken with spices to assist digestion. Soaking beans before cooking makes them easier to digest. Of all the beans, tofu and mung are the very best.

**Best:** Aduki beans, black gram, fava beans, kidney beans, lima beans, mung beans, navy beans, peas (split), pinto beans, soy beans, tofu

**Small Amounts:** Black beans

**Avoid:** Chickpeas, lentils, peanuts, tempeh

## SPICES

Spices aid the digestion and absorption of nutrients as well as improve flavor. As *pitta/kapha* individuals generally feel warm, mild to moderate spicing is good and care should be taken so that the overall spiciness of the food is not too hot. It is the overall effect of spicing that is most important and not the individual spice used. Large amounts of the best spices are best used to enhance flavor.

**Best:** Cardamom, catnip, chamomile, coriander,

cumin, curry leaves, fennel, lemon verbena, peppermint, saffron, spearmint, turmeric

**Small Amounts:** Allspice, anise, basil, bay leaves, caraway, dill, fenugreek, ginger (fresh), hyssop, oregano, paprika, parsley, poppy seeds, rosemary, sage, star anise, tarragon, thyme

**Avoid:** Asafoetida, black pepper, calamus, Cayenne pepper, celery seed, cinnamon, cloves, garlic (raw), ginger (dry), horseradish, marjoram, mustards (hot), nutmeg, salt

## CONDIMENTS

**Best:** None

**Small Amounts:** Carob (sweetened with proper sweeteners)

**Avoid:** Catsup, chocolate, mayonnaise, vinegar

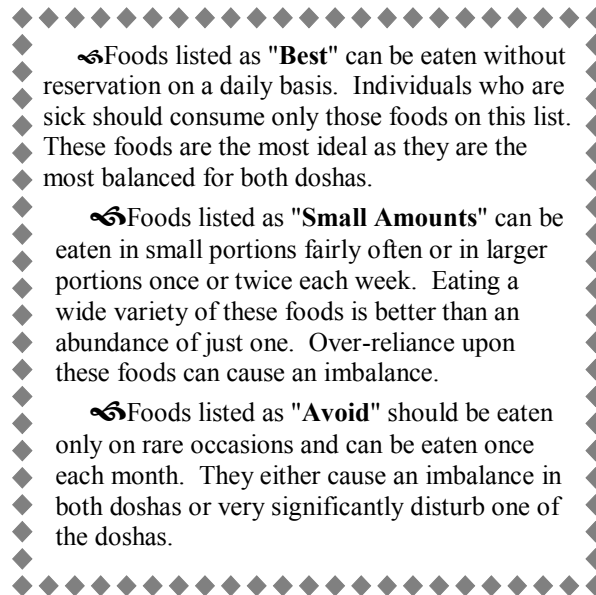
## BEVERAGES

These are best taken at room temperature or warm, and never ice cold.

**Best:** Green vegetable juices, tea (chamomile, mint, spice teas from the spices best list), water, water with lemon

**Small Amounts:** Naturally carbonated pure juice drinks with no sugar added

**Avoid:** Alcohol, black tea, coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated), fruit juices (sweet), soft drinks, soda pop (sweetened), spicy teas



☞ Foods listed as "**Best**" can be eaten without reservation on a daily basis. Individuals who are sick should consume only those foods on this list. These foods are the most ideal as they are the most balanced for both doshas.

☞ Foods listed as "**Small Amounts**" can be eaten in small portions fairly often or in larger portions once or twice each week. Eating a wide variety of these foods is better than an abundance of just one. Over-reliance upon these foods can cause an imbalance.

☞ Foods listed as "**Avoid**" should be eaten only on rare occasions and can be eaten once each month. They either cause an imbalance in both doshas or very significantly disturb one of the doshas.

## The Six Ayurvedic Tastes

There are six distinct tastes and each, as all of nature, is composed of elements. The overall qualities of the taste will either be harmonious or disharmonious to a doshic imbalance. The tastes form the basis of your food program and your herbal medicines.

### **SWEET: earth and water**

Is heavy, moist, and cool and increases Kapha while decreasing Vata and Pitta. Some examples are nuts, grains and most dairy.

### **SOUR: fire and earth**

Is heavy, moist, and hot and increases Pitta and Kapha while decreasing Vata. Some examples are fermented foods like yogurt and tempeh.

### **SALTY: water and fire**

Is heavy, moist, and hot and increases Pitta and Kapha while decreasing Vata. Some examples are seaweeds and seafood.

### **PUNGENT: fire and air**

Is light, dry, and hot and increases Pitta and Vata while decreasing Kapha. Some examples are chili peppers, ginger and black pepper.

### **ASTRINGENT: earth and air**

Is dry and cool and neither too heavy nor too light, and increases Vata while decreasing Pitta and Kapha. Some examples are most beans, cranberries, and pomegranates.

### **BITTER: air and ether**

Is light, dry, and cool, and increases Vata while decreasing Pitta and Kapha. Some examples are leafy greens and herbs like goldenseal.